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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses a project that was designed to explore Dutch student attitudes about World War II and how the War is portrayed in Dutch history textbooks. The project was undertaken as part of an effort to help teachers provide Dutch students with better insight into the causes, background, and aftermath of World War II; and to develop in the students a greater awareness of the values that were at stake. With the project, students come to understand that the values at stake during World War II are relevant to the expressions of racism and fascism that exist in the world today. The project includes an examination of the portrayal of World War II in seven Dutch textbooks. Ideas for helping students undertake historical research including primary sources are presented, as are ideas for helping teachers deal with various dilemmas they may face in teaching about World War II. Additional discussion questions that are addressed include: What image do students have of World War II? What is a world war? How can the Holocaust be treated in class? and What is the answer of history education? (Contains 7 references.) (DB)

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World War II, past and present

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Curriculum Development for history teaching in The Netherlands

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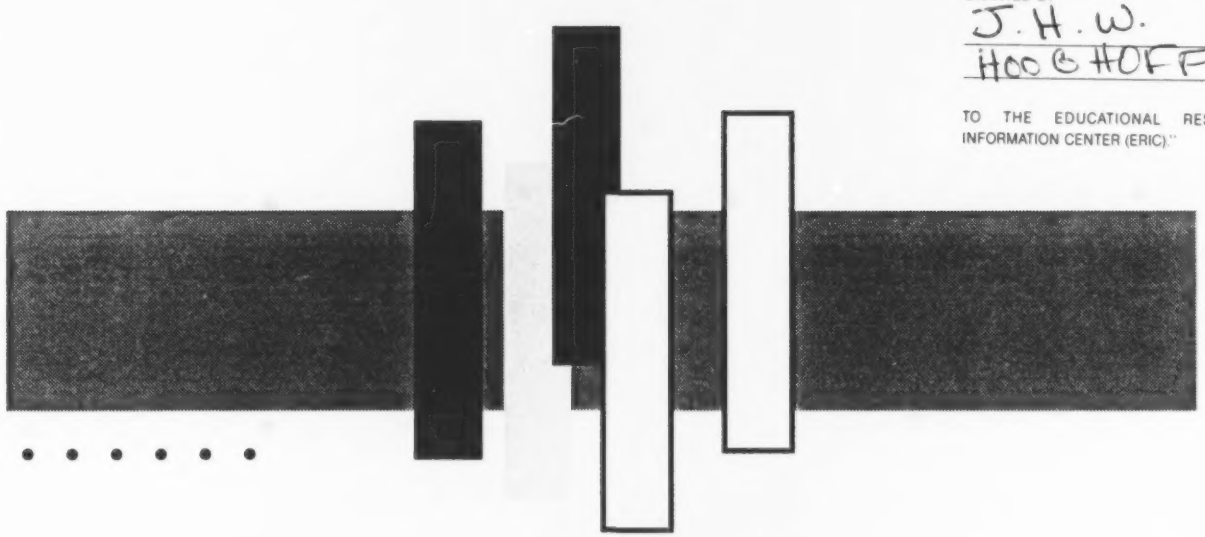

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National Institute for Curriculum Development (SLO)
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Curriculum Development for history teaching in The Netherlands

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Introduction

This lecture is largely based on *'De Tweede Wereldoorlog, Toen en Nu'* (World War II, Past and Present), a manual for teachers with accompanying learning materials. This publication was the outcome of a project that resulted from an official document issued by the former Minister of Welfare, Public Health and Culture. The document was about providing information to youngsters about World War II, especially in relation to the present time. The project was carried out by SLO in collaboration with the "History in the Classroom" foundation.
In the official document the Minister held a plea for better insight among youngsters into the causes, backgrounds and the aftermath of World War II and a greater awareness of the values that were then at stake. Actualization was seen as an important element: By bridging the gaps between the past, the present and the future an alertness may be fostered among young people against today's expressions of racism and fascism. Another aim is to raise the students' awareness. Human values, such as individual freedom, justice, tolerance and solidarity, cannot be taken for granted, but need defending.

To these ministerial guidelines some other elements were added in the SLO-project:

- World War II should not be presented as something that is all over now and that could only happen in the past.
- The notion of '(World) War' may not be taken for granted among students. Several questions must be addressed such as: what is a war in the twentieth century? "War" is more than a matter of soldiers and governments. With respect to this a statement by professsor Röling of a Dutch Institute for War and Peace Studies may be discussed: "War is seen as something ordinary, because there have been wars since the origin of mankind. We accept things we have grown accustomed to, although, meanwhile, many things have changed, which have made what we could somehow call reasonable into something unreasonable, ineffective, even insane."
- Not only should an understanding of victims of World War II be developed, but for the entire older generation that is now alive and still carries the burden of World War II.
  Next to an understanding of victims it is also important for students to gain insight into the ways of thinking and behaving of the offenders: what happened that people came to treat other people in such inhumane ways. What led people to resist it? What role did the silent majority play in this?

For the Netherlands this has been a unique project. It was the first time the government made funds available for the elaboration of the pedagogical principles for a specific historical topic. Both educational institutions and social organizations were involved in its elaboration.

1. What image do students have of World War II?

Fourteen or fifteen year old students often have a limited and one-sided image of a world war, and of World War II in particular. Especially boys often expect an exciting topic with much emphasis on military events and military, technical and strategic developments. Cartoons, the war literature and tv-films have usually caused the interest in these aspects. Students are often unaware of the complex nature of a world war or of the far-reaching consequences a world war could have for their own lives.
In the project we wanted to confront the students with the (big) differences between their views of a world war and reality. We first asked the students to write down their notions of war. We listed and discussed the results. Then we addressed the question how (in)complete each individual student's image is and how (in)complete the composite image of all students together. This was investigated in the next phase of the lesson. In this exercise the students could examine their images of the war by comparing them with several different and complex pictures from World War II. In how far did the students' images need complementing?

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2. What is the image of World War II in textbooks?

In the Netherlands schools have a large degree of educational autonomy. Consequently there are many textbooks whose contents may vary a lot. We checked if the project's postulates were reflected in the contents of the textbooks. Examining individual textbooks showed that several aspects remained undiscussed. Altogether, however, the textbooks present a varied image of the war.

All history textbook writers have a problem in that too much information must be included within the limited space available in the books. This problem is possibly even bigger for the teachers. They have a limited number of lessons available and usually have to make selections from what the textbook has to offer.

Textbook writers generally pay due attention to the treatment of the historical survey in the textbook concerned. A treatment that is too superficial should be avoided. A question such as: "There are many resistance monuments or war monuments. Can you mention one of these?" may be far more effective when some questions are added, for example "What is the difference between a resistance monument and a war monument? Why have these monuments been erected? What is the meaning of these monuments for people who have not experienced the war themselves? There are annual memorial services at many of these monuments on the fourth of May. Why do you go there or why don't you? Why do other people go there?" War monuments could also be placed in a historical perspective: "What changes can be noted in the 'language' of the war monuments in the course of history?"

Sometimes there is too much simplification in textbooks. A question such as "What did Hitler do to exterminate the Jews?" The massacre of the Jews was not a single person's act and it is wrong to give the impression that it was. It is better to ask questions about the measures the National Socialist government took against the Jews. There will always be people with ideas that seem bizarre in other people's eyes. But how could such a terrible thing be carried out on such a large scale? Many people must have been needed for it. What were their thoughts about it? Students may be asked: "who were the people who collaborated in one form or another, either voluntarily or forced, in the killing of millions of Jews and others in concentration camps. And what may have been their motives?"

History is a discussion without end. In textbooks, however, there is little evidence for this statement. Most textbook writers presumably suppose that offering different interpretations is too difficult for pupils, or that interpreting and handling interpretations is something for the university and not for pupils or ordinary citizens. In everyday life, however, everybody is confronted with widely differing interpretations all the time, mainly through the media. Presenting the true story about the past is diametrically opposed to the nature of the subject history.
Trying to present an unambiguous story leads to the avoidance of topics about which there is no consensus at all. Historians themselves can react to their colleagues' opinions in their professional work. The textbook writers, who want to write an

unambiguous story, must make choices. If they do so in matters of controversy they can be sure of the attacks of critics. They will also disappoint many colleagues with other opinions.
In dealing with the topic of World War II the causes of the war are avoided in some textbooks by writing little about them and only in implicit terms. An explanation for this might be that the writers find an analysis into the causes that led to the war of little importance. This, however, is unlikely.
Other textbooks present a clear vision, though. It is noticeable that several textbooks ascribe many things to Hitler. "Hitler did this" and "Hitler did that" occurs quite frequently.

The point of history is not only knowing a lot, but rather investigating and handling information. In dealing with a topic such as World War II, many teachers try to promote the students' spiritual resilience. Then "higher values" are essential. These "higher values" occur in some textbooks, but not in others. Generally questions prevail that require students to reproduce somehow the data provided in the textbook. The underlying assumption is that students need not be trained in handling information critically. Whoever believes in spiritual resilience of the whole population, will not subscribe to this view.

More than they obviously have until now, teachers and textbook writers must try to think of questions that not only require reproduction, but also contribute to the students' spiritual resilience. Such questions are meant for all pupils in secondary education. It is essential, however, to design tasks of a level that is appropriate for the pupils concerned.

3. Causes, consequences and values in seven Dutch textbooks

In the following sections we will present a survey of causes, consequences and values as they have been examined in seven Dutch textbooks. For each the number of textbooks is given that mention the cause, consequence or value concerned.

* **Causes**

a. Harsh dictates of the Versailles Treaty (6),
b. The aggressive nature of National Socialism (2),
c. Hitler's foreign policy (2),
d. Chamberlain's foreign policy (2),
e. the Great Depression (5),
f. Nazism (2),
g. The Polish-German war (5),
h. Nazi-Germany's need for Lebensraum (2),
i. Lenient attitude of Western European countries (6),
j. The Hitler-Stalin Pact (2),
k. Hitler's need for Lebensraum (5),
l. Hitler's determination to put an end to Communism in the Soviet Union (1),
m. Hitler's determination to gain supremacy in Europe (2).

* **Consequences**

short term

a. loss of possessions (victims of the camps and those expelled from their homelands) (2),
b. material damage: devastated cities, inundations etc. (6),
c. the demolition of factories by the adversary (3),
d. the purge of the civil service (0),
e. the creation of Marshall Aid (5),
f. the accelerated decolonization process (5),
g. the origin of a refugee problem (3).

long term

a. the lasting struggle to overcome war traumas: the loss of human lives among friend and relatives (7), mentally and physically handicapped people as a result of the war (4),
b. the division of Germany (6),
c. growing international support for the creation of Israel (2),
d. the expansion of the Soviet Union's territory at the cost of other nations (5),
e. "the shift of Poland's territory" at the cost of other nations (5),
f. the creation of the United Nations (7),
g. the establishment of the European Communities (5),
h. the rise of the US and the USSR to world powers, the decline of Western Europe's political role (2),

i. the rise of the Eastern and Western power blocs (5),
j. the founding of NATO and the Warsaw Pact (6),
k. the existence of nuclear weapons (3),
l. the trial of criminals of war (3).

• **Values**

Allied values
a. freedom in general (7), freedom of speech (4), freedom of the press (4), religious freedom, political freedom (1),
b. equality (1),
c. justice (1),
d. democracy (1),
e. tolerance (2),
f. solidarity (2),
g. mutual respect (1),
h. self-determination of nations (2),

Fascist values
a. principle of the leader (5),
b. inequality among people: the elite/the strong must lead (2),
c. the inferiority of the Slavs and the Jews (5),
d. the woman's role: kids, husband, kitchen (3),
e. one party's right to decide on everybody and everything (4),
f. glorification of violence, of the military (3),
g. emotion over reason (2),
h. Chauvinism, Nationalism (2),
i. belief that war is something natural (1),
j. obedience, discipline (2),

The clash of allied values and fascist values
a. in the German Parliament, the political Republic of Weimar (3),
b. the same in the Netherlands (1),
c. opposition against the Nazis in Germany (3),
d. resistance in the Netherlands against the occupying forces and their collaborators (7),
e. democracy versus dictatorship (1).

Taking all things together a many-sided image of World war II is presented. The occurrence of many aspects, however, is the exception rather than the rule.

- Many textbooks pay hardly any attention to values. The explanation must be found in the idea that textbook writers refrain from transmitting values through history education. They see the transmission of values as a task of parents and institutions such as the Church.
- Many textbooks ascribe too many things to Hitler alone.
  All too often Hitler is used as a synonym for all evil connected with World War II. This evokes questions such as: "Was Hitler to blame for the war, for the oppression and the persecution? Did Hitler consciously work towards all this from the start? Or should the causes be found in less 'personalized circumstances' such as the Versailles Treaty, the Great Depression, the fear of Communism? Was the war perhaps made possible through the acts of other political leaders?"
- Many textbooks pay little attention to ordinary men and women and their attitudes towards the events. This aspect is related to the topic of "leadership".

Who are the ordinary people? Who voted for Hitler? How did he manage to get all the support? What were the reactions of the other Germans? Who carried out his ideas? What did people in Germany and in the Netherlands do during the occupation? Was it natural to adapt to the circumstances or did people consider putting up resistance to the enemy? What were the possibilities for resistance in a totalitarian state? Few people will have acted in the conviction that they could influence the course of history by their deeds. What other considerations did people have? Was it self-interest, friendship, opportunism, solidarity, belief, idealism? These questions are hardly answered in textbooks. Ordinary men and women, what were their attitudes towards events?

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4. Not only transfer of knowledge but also source research

New history education is not only aimed at the transfer of knowledge, but also at research by pupils. The SLO-project has followed that trend. History consists of images, interpretations. History is used and abused. The president of the German National Socialist teachers association in the nineteen thirties said: "whereas until now history education has mainly taken sources as points of departure, we will now almost completely refrain from studying sources to avoid violating the educational force of the content matter by telling about the past as vividly as possible." Until now this view has also been shared by many non-National Socialists. Captivating the pupils' interests is what counts. Captivating the students' interest is not forbidden in the new history education, but the prime objective is the development of a critical mind, to learn critical thinking and handling all kinds of information. Working with sources has become essential again. History education can contribute to people's spiritual resilience in this way.
The status of certain historical sources in schools differs from their status in academic research. Pupils should mainly learn to handle sources they come across in their daily lives, such as newspapers, (youth) literature, film/television, radio, posters, etc.
We shall now present a few examples of several sources and several kinds of skills that were used in the SLO-project:

* **Distinguishing specific characteristics of several kinds of sources (in this case political cartoons)**

Political cartoons are made for various reasons. Sometimes the artist only wishes to signal a political situation, describe it without giving an opinion. Often the artist wants to make his opinion clear. Sometimes he includes arguments for his opinion in his cartoon, sometimes he does not. Artists sometimes also appeal to the reader to do certain things or to refrain from doing them. The pupils should learn to recognize such differences. For example, the students may study one or more cartoons about the possible causes of World War II.

* **Recognizing intentional and non-intentional information in a source (in this case pictorial material)**

The students should pay attention to information that has intentionally been provided to the reader and information that has non-intentionally been supplied. A good example is a poster commissioned by the German occupation. In German eyes the true Dutchman joined the German army. In the background the artist presents a loafer with an orange match in his buttonhole, a coin with the carved image of queen Wilhelmina next to it, the Dutch lion on his tie and a handkerchief with the colours of the Dutch flag in his breast-pocket. In the foreground is an energetic Dutchman in a German uniform. In this way the artist unintentionally shows that there were many people in the Netherlands at that time, who did not want to have anything to do with the occupying forces and who saw the House of Orange as a symbol of resistance to

the occupation. All this can be inferred from only one poster.

* **Asking questions (in this case written sources)**

- A survey may be supplied to the students containing the figures for government spending on armament in Germany, Great Britain and the United States between 1929 and 1943. The following questions may be asked: "Why should these figures be interpreted with some caution? What other data would you need for a sound comparison of the military strength of the three nations?"
- Students may be invited to study a headline of the German 'National Zeitung': "Four million concentration camp victims made up. Wiesenthal unmasked." A question may be: "if you wanted to challenge this statement, what proofs would you need?"

* **Critically and responsibly deciding if one is willing to accept something as a fact.**

This is a major skill when contradictory or one-sided information is presented. You can be prepared for one-sided or incorrect information, but you can only recognize it if you have enough knowledge at your disposal. If you visit the documentation centre of the Buchenwald concentration camp in the (former) German Democratic Republic, you will read that the camp liberated itself, whereas the truth is that the Americans liberated the camp, 11 April 1945. They handed the camp over to the Russians as agreed and withdrew behind the demarcation line. There is nothing about all this in this documentation centre. If the teacher wants to practice this skill with his students, he must provide additional materials. Here is an example how this skill may be practiced with respect to World War II.
In a broadcast by Dutch School television about the Hitlerjugend (Hitler's youth organization) it is presented as a fact that the German young people at the time were brainwashed and did not know what they were doing. The students study sources in an exercise that enables them to check this statement. Are students prepared to accept this statement as a fact? There are several sources that students may study: memories of people who were members of the Hitlerjugend; among these are those who remained faithful to National Socialism during the war and those who joined, but wanted to leave after a shorter or longer period, who joined the resistance movement or reluctantly contributed to the National Socialist state.

* **Recognizing opinions, values judgements, prejudice and stereotypes**

An example with audio documents.
- The greater part of the discussion in the Reichstag has been preserved, when Hitler obtained the votes and the support of the Center parties and managed to get the Bill accepted that granted him full authority. Part of the recording is a vehement discussion between Hitler and the Social Democrat Wels and the statement by Kaas, the leader of the Center Party why he supported the Bill. These materials enable the students to examine the values that were at stake in this debate, when democracy perished.

Examples of films or literature:
In World War II people had to choose. The resistance movement offers a good perspective for the teacher: who joined the resistance? Why did they join the resistance and what was the motivating factor? Was it the natural thing to do, was it accidental or a deliberate choice? What were the forms of resistance? What was the size of this group compared to the rest of the population? In how far were people who joined the resistance movement counteracted by those who did not join or were

they tacitly supported? What did people who did not join do or think? These questions are all treated in the film "The girl with the red hair", based on a novel with the same title by Theun de Vries.

* **Recognizing explicit and "hidden" propaganda**

An example with audio documents
Students may listen to one or more radio programmes or parts of them. The teacher or the textbook can provide a definition of propaganda that the students can use for an analysis to find out if it is a propagandistic broadcast. We here mention two possibilities:

- Max Blokzijl was a Dutch fascist who became well-known in the war for his radio talks. Several of these have been preserved. Such a radio talk, which is a subtle way of promoting fascism, may be analyzed. What were his methods, why was his propaganda so ingenious? For example, he not only criticized the opponent, but did not always spare his own party, either.
- A "Wunschkonzert" (musical request programme) for the German Wehrmacht (army) with all sorts of songs, harsh propaganda, but also hidden propaganda and totally innocent songs. The analysis of parts of the programme may lead to a discussion about the role of artists in a totalitarian state. What should you do? What did German (and possibly Dutch) artists do in the war?

* **Recognizing local context**

An example with pictorial material
When they view images students should try to determine the local context of the maker. What does the maker mean to say with the image? Has he selected an exceptional moment or detail out of a larger whole? And why did he do so?
Students may study a World War II picture of a man with a dunce head at the labour exchange, who volunteers for work in Germany, because the grass in Germany is much better. Some questions:

a. What was the artist's judgement on Dutchmen working in Germany? How did he arrive at his opinion?
b. What will the Dutchmen who went to work in Germany have thought of the cartoon? How did they arrive at their opinion?
c. What is your opinion about work in Germany? How do you arrive at your opinion?

An example with film

When the film *'Triumph des Willens'* (Triumph of the Will) is available, the students may be presented with different opinions about the film. Its producer, Leni Riefenstahl says she made a clean documentary, whereas opponents say she was a Nazi at heart and that she made the film as such. How does Leni Riefenstahl's local context show? To make this clear, you need not play the whole film. The initial scenes, where Hitler arrives in Nurmberg and drives through the streets of the city would suffice, followed by Hitler's ten-minute speech at the end of the film.

5. Dilemmas in the treatment of World War II

* **Dilemma 1: How to deal with values in the classroom?**

Values can be transmitted to students implicitly and explicitly in an unambiguous way. Values can also be questioned. After the discussion students can either be left with a personal point of view or it may be made clear to them that the value system of their own group is the right one.
Many history teachers are extremely hesitant with respect to transferring values through history education, which can be explained by the very nature of their discipline. They will consider it as their task to make value systems visible. They see the transfer of values as primarily a task of parents and institutions such as the church.
However, history education cannot avoid treating values in class. Without any hesitation some emperors and empresses are called "The Great". Why were they esteemed? And by whom? Then, but now? There are frequent commemorations in connection with historical events or persons. Why do people find it worthwhile to commemorate some events, whereas others receive no attention? It should become clear to the students that an impartial education is not possible. An important aim is to learn how to handle values and to find out about one's own.
Kernel questions about the topic World War II and our own time could be:

- What were the central values in the battle between the fascists and their adversaries?
- What is the status of those values in the practice of our own times?
- In how far are there differences with respect to values between the period of World War II and our own times?
- In how far do these values clash in practice?

In most Dutch schools teachers have great autonomy in the field of curriculum development. Teachers, however, have hardly been trained to cope with values in classrooms. The result is that they are hardly treated explicitly. Neither do textbooks give the teacher much help in the treatment of values.

* **Dilemma 2: Excitement versus Essence**

The past may not be forgotten, but a distorted recollection is as useless as oblivion. Some people object to history on television, history in the home. However horrible a disaster or however remarkable a statement, you can always watch and peel your apple at the same time. If you do not like at all what you see, you just switch over to another channel. The degree of realism of the world is made relative, the borderline between entertainment and reality becomes vague. That is one side of the coin; the other side is that the real world is turned into entertainment. As soon as the television cameras are present, the trutn may no longer be difficult or tedious to prevent the viewers from getting bored. The attitude to ward off threatening information is strong.
Many people feel attracted to misery, preferably combined with suspense. When an

accident has happened, there is usually a big public interest. There is even a special kind of film: 'disaster movies'. Each night people are being killed on tv in crime series and Rambo rages. This is all done to entertain the audience. Does not World War II provide a welcome addition to a large audience's wish to undergo the sensational feelings of a deathly game?
Why do many teachers often show video-programmes with a lot of pandemonium from multiple rocket launchers and other weaponry, troops moving across the screen causing destruction and innumerable human suffering? Why does the battle fascinate more than questions such as "how could it happen?, What motivated people to do such things or to remain inactive? And what were the consequences?"

Obviously the students should know about the suffering in World War II on both sides. Is it not a task of education to pay attention to essential questions as mentioned above? We believe that the teacher who asks the right questions and can find the appropriate materials will sooner promote compassion and empathy than feelings of sensation. Teachers will find many suggestions for such materials in this book.

* **Dilemma 3: Black-and-white thinking and hero-worship versus nuance**

Students -and not only they- have a strong need for heroes with whom they can identify. They are inclined to black-and-white thinking, contrasting the absolute good up against the absolute evil. They have a desire for clear categories. They also need a happy ending. World War II can offer all this: good and evil, hero and villain, the triumph of the good.
This need among students is very similar to the way many people thought during the war. In a war there is generally little need of a balanced view of the adversary or criticism of the own side. After the war many books, films and television programmes about World War II have fulfilled this need for black-and-white thinking. Germans and Japanese are usually inhuman and slightly less skilled than the allied forces. Hitler, Mussolini and their followers are sometimes presented so negatively that it becomes almost impossible for students to imagine how a large section of the German and Italian people could support them. The own side is always right. The Rotterdam bombardment was "an unscrupulous deed", whereas the assault on Dresden - acclaimed in the war - was rarely mentioned afterwards. Hiroshima was "necessary". Whoever thinks of the holocaust feels no need for nuance. Before and during the war, however, more things happened that deserve our attention.

With the passing of the years there is an increase in the number of people that is willing to take a less black-and-white point of view with respect to various aspects of the war. Mainly journalists and historians express these views, due to their professional backgrounds. They are often faced with vehement reactions of fellow citizens that hold different views.
The teacher should try to create an understanding among students for both groups by teaching students to think in "contemporary categories". In a war black-and-white thinking is a natural phenomenon, but for later generations it is easier to look at the events from a distance and critically examine one's own role. For example the teacher can point at the attention that has only recently been given to the fate of NSB-children (children of parents who collaborated with the German occupation) during the war and afterwards. The way in which they have been treated does not fit in the familiar black-and-white categories.
In a more diverse view also fits a balanced treatment of the values that were at stake. Friendship, loyalty to your group or your country existed on both sides in the war and could have both very positive and very appalling consequences.

In heroic stories heroes tend to survive, they are seldom caught and if they are, they manage to escape. Only minor characters lose their lives. The teacher may also correct this image. For example, he can pay attention to people who were imprisoned in concentration camps and, in as far as they survived, have been bearing the mark of this experience for the rest of their lives.

* **Dilemma 4: Unique or universal?**

In how far should World War II be treated as a unique or as a universal phenomenon? Every historical topic contains unique and universal aspects. When the past is treated in schools and when justice is done to the past, a teacher will pay attention to the two aspects. What, however, in the case of World War II, is unique and what is universal? There is no agreement among those who study the past.
"Unique or universal" relates to the treatment of World War II in general. War as a historical phenomenon fascinates scientists that study war and peace issues more than historians. Their work is less known among history teachers than the books written by historians that study World War II as such. When a teacher wants to discuss with his students if and how a repetition of a war such as World War II can be prevented, it is unavoidable to find an answer to the question of the uniqueness or generality of this war. With respect to the topic of "Current Relevance of World War II" these questions are especially relevant.
The terms fascist and fascism have been frequently used in recent years to designate current phenomena and people. This extended use of the term goes too far. Apart from the fact that the terms often have the function of terms of abuse, the Interbellum period and World War II differ too much from our own times to justify the use of the same label for phenomena then and now. Besides, fascism during the Interbellum and World War II had different faces. On the other hand the focus should not only be on the unique and exceptional. Insight into current events can be enhanced by comparing contemporary phenomena with fascist expressions of the past. When comparing the periods it is also important to avoid looking at the extreme terminal stages of fascism only, but also at the social-economic and political factors that determined the rise of fascism.

6. What is a world war?

Students are often unaware of the complex nature of a world war or of the far-reaching consequences a world war could have for people's lives during the war and long after. It is an important task for teachers in secondary schools to show the complex nature of a world war. Students should come to realize that World War II has had a strong impact until today and that studying that war will lead to a better understanding of people who experienced that period and of what people are able to do to each other in a war.

What exactly is a world war? In the past, i.e. before World War II, a war was generally the business of armies and governments. In a "total" war, such as World War II, the whole population of a country gets involved: in a physical, material and psychological sense. How can a teacher deal with these aspects in class? How can a teacher make this clear to the students? A world map provides an overall image of the countries that were involved in World War II. Photos and perhaps also films show that bombardments were an important aspect of the war strategy and that the nations involved did not spare civilian targets. World War II greatly influenced the daily lives of people in the warring nations. A war industry was built up, in which women were working, whereas the men were at the front. In the occupied territories there were increasing shortages of foodstuffs and natural resources. Photos and fragments taken from diaries can illustrate this part of World War II.

Another aspect of this war was the enormous impact it had on people's thinking. Governments used radio, film and newspapers to make propaganda for their own ideas. Putting for example a Nazi-poster next to an allied poster will show that conflicting interests were at stake. During the war everybody had to make a difficult choice: collaborating, adapting or resisting.

People had to make choices in World War II. How can we show to students what choices people made and what their motives were? From the resistance's perspective a teacher can make this question more concrete: who joined the resistance movement? Why did they join and what was the immediate motivating factor? Was it the natural thing to do, was it accidental or a deliberate choice? What were the forms of resistance? How large was the group compared to the rest of the population? In how far were people who joined the resistance movement counteracted by those who did not join or were they tacitly supported? What did people who did not join do or think? These questions are all treated in the film *"Het meisje met het rode haar"* ("The girl with the red hair"), based on a novel with the same title by Theun de Vries.

7. How can the Holocaust be treated in class?

Most textbooks present the Holocaust as a typical German matter. Anti-Semitism, intrinsically connected with the Holocaust, is explained. The textbook writers, however, do not mention anti-Semitism as a contemporary phenomenon.
When the Holocaust is treated, it is important to avoid treating this genocide as a unique event. It is advisable to put the Holocaust in a historical context. The Holocaust is indeed unique in the way in which it took place: the Nazi-destruction apparatus with the subtle gradual approach that led to concentration camps and gas chambers. There are many examples of other genocides in history, though: six million Russians were killed during the Stalin period; the two million dead in Cambodia, victims of Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge; 1.5 million Armenians killed by the Turks and recently the Kurds by Sadam Hussain in Iraq.
In dealing with the Holocaust, the students must gain the insight that everybody played a role in this genocide somehow, although it was often a very gradual process. Many people conformed to the measures connected with the Holocaust and were directly or indirectly involved in the destruction process. The first person that comes to mind is the executioner, but also the train driver: everyone was a small cog in the destruction machine.
Students must try to understand the motives of people in a different and exceptional period and realize that people in the past did not have the same information that we have now. Students should also be encouraged to decide for themselves who is to blame.
The treatment of the Holocaust means gruesome images and stories. Especially for younger students it is advisable to make things clear in an indirect way and by making use of stories of or about individual people. There are reports of surviving witnesses on film, in prose and in poetry, that make a deeper impression than piles of dead bodies. The tremendous size of the Holocaust can be shown by images of mountains of shoes, wedding rings and hair of the Jews that were killed.
With an eye on the future teachers and students can hold up the mirror of the past. In a television documentary "Nauwgezet en wanhopig" (exact and desperate), broadcast June 23, 1989 by the Dutch television organization VPRO, the British professor George Steiner said: "After Auschwitz and Kolima nobody should (have to) say in front of the mirror in the morning: 'while I am standing here, Pol Pot is burying people alive. We are going to stop him, irrespective of political interests, because we are human beings. We watched television. We went to a restaurant or the theatre, they made a film about it, *"The Killing Fields"*, but nothing was done about it. I was foolish enough to believe that Israel would perhaps say: no man is buried alive. No man is beaten with rubber bars till his skull burst open. Justice and a minimum amount of decency towards other people's bodies, that is what counts.' I am still waiting for that one sentence to come. There are moments that one desperately wonders if humanity will ever become human."

8. What is the answer of history education?

Generally speaking history education has not paid enough attention to the link with the present time. The textbook explained everything about the past and presented one point of view. This was one of the reasons that the treatment of values, causes and consequences has often been avoided in many textbooks. Critically dealing with many different sources that have a meaning for our own times can be greatly improved in many textbooks. The SLO-project has tried to contribute to this.
The SLO-project *"World War II, Past and Present"* was developed to change the current situation and was tested in schools. Teachers have worked with the project and are generally enthusiastic about it. The pictures and text materials make an optimal use in class possible. The tasks motivate the students to think for themselves, to decide for themselves and to take things in their own hands.
A frequently heard complaint was that the programme of the lessons was overloaded. We made them work hard! The teacher on the other hand did not have to treat everything.
Some teachers organized forms of collaboration with other subjects. In one MAVO-3 class the teacher of Dutch and the history teacher jointly treated the aftermath of World War II in Dutch literature. They are very positive about this symbiosis.
"There is no need to follow the SLO-method exactly," said one teacher. The project is an excellent addition to existing textbooks and an enrichment of the history lessons.
Summing up we can conclude that the project *"World War II, Past and Present"* has been successful. We have successfully treated the 1940-1945 period by linking it to the present day. One teacher summarized it as follows: "The nice thing about history education is that your own work is subject to historical processes. The challenge is to add a new dimension to the material". *"World War II, Past and Present"* was the experiment. Let us hope that the successful results of the experiment will become widely known.

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